FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

"For a world united in prayer"

Volume XXVI, Number 6, December 1975

FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

Founded by Carl Allison Evans (1880 - 1956)

OUR PURPOSE: To promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of Fellowship among mankind.

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EDITORIAL

THE BEST CHRISTMAS-PRESENT

I PLAYED the part of Scrooge in a stage-version of Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* at high school. I recall the relish with which I said "Bah, humbug!" and made myself out to be as cold-hearted and mean as the famous old miser. Although I was only a boy, I was already wise enough to have been able to spot the joy taken by some people in the destruction of what they cannot understand usually because it is something that goes contrary to their beliefs and wishes: I was used if not yet enured (I never was) to their contemptuous sneers. Although I had no talent at all as an actor, I got involved in my portrayal of Scrooge first for the delightfully turn-about thrill of pretending to be mean and cold-hearted myself and also, I believe, for the opportunity it gave me of trying to figure out from the inside, as it were, those who did not like me and made no bones about it.

I was too young as well as too untalented to be able to accomplish any deep or genuine act of understanding in the course of my one performance as Scrooge on the stage in the school gym. Life, moreover, kept going on, day after day, and eventually brought into my existence other Scrooges, and the trick of coping with them, each different on the surface but underneath incredibly the same, took all my energies and kept me from acquiring any general understanding of those who desired, or so I believed, to persecute me. (A friend of mine is always attempting to convince me that there are no accidents in life, and when I think of the Scrooges I am ready to agree with him: the constant appearance and reappearance of the same sort of personality invariably providing me with the same sort of pain must have had a purpose—namely, the development in my too highstrung and much too tender nature of a capacity to understand and ultimately to smile and to forgive.)

For a good many years, though, my ever-reappearing Scrooges gave me a hard—a rough time. To be found unacceptable is a difficult thing to cope with at my age, and they did it relentlessly.

However, by a miracle in my latter years I have changed or,

to be accurate, I have been changed. I have been given the ability not only to perceive what makes my Scrooges tick but also what up until recently was an unrecognized challenge within me that ignited the ticking and made it sound so terrible. Now that I can see it, I am able to smile at it. I am belatedly able to shout "God bless everyone!" . . . . This is the most precious gift ever left for me under the tree. —P. G.

FOUR HAIKU FOR CHANUKAH

Jeanne Bonnette

Gold Star of David
glistening here on the wall,
faith of Judaism,

strengthening the home
against human weaknesses,
Gold Star of David.

Eight candles lighted. . . .
final night of Chanukah,
shining flames of faith,

faith, the umbrella
in the rainstorms of living. . . .
the greater shelter.

THE PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS *by Reuben L. Musey*

1975 — MY YEAR TO REMEMBER

A YEAR AGO Fellowship in Prayer announced that "yours truly" had assumed office as President.

At that time, since the Fellowship was approaching its twenty-fifth year, I chose as the theme for 1975:

"A look backward...an aim forward...."

Reflecting back:

"December is the month when we remember the greatest gift to all eternity — the birth of the Christ Child.

"The Wise Men brought their gifts to herald the birth of the King of Kings.

"As we prepare our gift-list for family, relatives, and friends why not include a subscription to Fellowship in Prayer?

"Wouldn't it be a rich reward if each member added as many new members to the Fellowship at Christmas as possible—then made a goal during the coming year—the silver anniversary year—to complete a total of twenty-five new members to the Fellowship?

"By doing this, we know that faith is the spirit which makes life worth living, and through belief in God and His direction all 'dreams' are possible."

The February issue stated:

"Last December the Fellowship welcomed more new subscribers than in any previous month in its history. This occurred because members were so generous about giving gift-subscriptions to friends in this silver anniversary year...."

June marked a memorable occasion for Fellowship in Prayer. The Fellowship was incorporated twenty-five years ago on the seventieth birthday of its founder, Carl Allison Evans.

Quotes from "two decades plus five" issues supported our purpose:

"To promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed or color...."

August: we noted the fruits of harvest by announcing the seeds of spring had been planted, watered and nurtured. The fruits of labor yielded an increase, and there was a measure of growth in membership.

October: the Fellowship in the autumn glory pathway in this the silver anniversary year paused before coming to the end of the path while the tinge of autumn remained in the air to thank members for their loyal support, patronage, time, and energy in bringing new members into the Fellowship.

At this hour, we stand on the threshold of a new year. It marks for the citizens of the United States the bicentennial of the nation's independence. People from all over the world will be journeying to the shores of America. It will be a memorable period in the lives of the people of America and in the lives of people who come from all parts of the globe.

Let us pause at this season of the year to hear once more the age-old words: "Peace on earth, goodwill to men...."

Also, let us turn back in time to the landing of Christopher Columbus on the shores of what was to be named America. He fell on his knees to acknowledge by this act of humility and worship the goodness and greatness of God in this new sphere of his works. He said: "Almighty and eternal God, who by the energy of Thy creative word has made the firmament, the earth, and the sea; blessed and glorified be Thy name in all places! May Thy majesty and dominion be exalted forever and ever, as Thou hast permitted Thy holy name to be made known and spread by the most humble of Thy servants in this hitherto unknown portion of Thy empire."

Let us approach the new year with new hopes, new dreams: "For a world united in prayer."

PRAYER FOR THE FELLOWSHIP *Dennis Barry Carroll*

HEAVENLY FATHER, as we end the silver anniversary year for Fellowship in Prayer, we ask your guidance in the year ahead for visions and ideals — a new beginning in a new year for "A World United in Prayer." The past is in Your keeping.—the future Your mercy awaits. Amen.

POEM

Cornelia Bagarotti

I would not
If I were God
Choose the city streets,
But God knows more than I.

These little birds
Have never known
Blue hills and trees
and yet
They sing, they fly
They fill the sky
With purest joy.
Even the fences are
Substitutes
For trees.

Oh, if my Soul
Could be
As close to Thee
I too could make
A fence a tree.

A PRAYER OF THANKS

Phil Flott, Jr.

Lord of life,
the wind touches my body,
my legs walk on the grass's dew,
my ears relax with the movement of the tree limbs,
my eyes are at peace with the clouds.
Thank you, Lord, for these gifts.

THE PRIME BUILDER

Alma Ebert

Who holds the stars in orbit? the winds on leash?
Who molds the leaf? and shapes the tides?
He, Who set the fragile rainbow
Against the mountain's granite sides.

Who fashioned the frosted snowflake?
Who formed the flame. . . the sea. . . the buttercups?
He, Who thought of the wild grey goose;
Smoothed the desert; and pushed the cordilleras up.

We kneel to Him Who let loose
The power — in each blade of grass —
To reach toward the sun's vitality
Its dark-bound roots to surpass.

We are still reading with wonder —
Since first He unrolled the scroll —
Searching the cosmic splendor;
Yearning to know the Whole.

We range our glorious Universe:
Throne of Creator-God,
Who keeps in ordered season
The light. . . the seed. . . the sod.

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY

Mary Imogene Harris

In the middle of the day
I find
that the rhythm goes much easier
if I stop
to pray.

WINGS OF LIGHT (New Year's Poem)

Elizabeth Twyeffort

The noise from bells soon poised to ring
And shouts of men, as one ascend
In that split second beckoned on
By blending time at midnight's end.

Each granite peak hears silence speak.
Snow caverns more than echoes know;
While clouds shift shadows on the land
And moon controls the seas' outflow.

If we should raise our eyes towards sky
Some stable star in quiet poise
Will point our minds above mankind
Away from earthlings' worthless noise.

Our hands reach out to touch this hour
Like blind man's fingers loath to leave
Familiar features from whose strength
New inspirations they receive.

Set lighted candle-boats afloat
For loved ones gone from us each year,
That wings of light may sail through night,
And all our darkness disappear.

LOOK UP

Annie Lee Griffin

Look up
Keep looking up . . .
On wings of prayer and faith
turmoils melt. Behold that rainbow
smiling!

REMEMBER

Erica May Brooks

Seven words,
only seven,
six and one, are all
we need today.
Care, Trust, Love, Give, Thank, Pray,
and Witness.

Remembering
not to judge,
nor to fear.
Letting Love govern
all we do — day
by day.

AGGRESSION VERSUS VIOLENCE

Florence B. Unangst

FEELINGS of aggression are positive emotions. Birth is an aggressive act, creating a painting or poem is an aggressive act, even studying to advance oneself is.

However, we too often confuse aggression with violence. Violence is a negative emotion, a tacit admission that the reasoning mind has lost control.

Aggression should mean progression, a forward movement toward a better situation.

Far better to talk out your differences of opinion with an acquaintance than to punch him in the nose. The world would progress much more rapidly if discussions, no matter how heated, replaced destruction.

No one individual can change the world, but each can work toward changing his little part of it.

WHEN GOD SPEAKS IN WHISPERS

Ruby A. Jones

AT LONG LAST we had a girl in the family after six grandsons!

But Lisa's eighty-eight year old great grandmother, who was seriously ill in the hospital, did not get to see her. Her funeral services were held on the Wednesday before Mother's Day, the Sunday scheduled for Lisa's christening.

On going into the sanctuary that morning, I brought a beautiful pot of lavender chrysanthemums, a gift to Mother before her death. They were Mother's favorite color.

The usher placed them on the altar.

As we stood before the pastor, Jon, Janet, little Jon, Jr., and two sets of grandparents, together with the latest arrival, I felt completely choked.

This had been Mother's church. How many Sundays the little lady had sat in her usual place at the rear of the sanctuary. Why couldn't she have been here on this morning to take part in this memorable family occasion?

As the thought went through my mind, the pastor reached for the dark-haired little lassie. Janet passed her into his waiting arms. Over her head, the beautiful stained-glass window suddenly broke into light as the sun cut through the clouds. A shaft of it focused itself directly on the mums. It never wavered throughout the service. The knot in my throat loosened. I relaxed. Somehow, I knew that she was there to join us in welcoming her replacement. . . .

Some time later, when I was cleaning out a collection of odds and ends in a small filing cabinet, I thought again of Mother. During her last years, she had been captive—chained to her chair and eventually to her bed. She could not read and, at the end, could not communicate.

"O God," I prayed. "Wherever Mom is, let her be happy now! Would that I could *know*!"

I turned over a three-by-five card on which I had jotted

down an idea a couple of years before. I froze. There on the back of the card was a note in Mother's familiar script. It must have been put there six or seven years ago while she could still use a pencil. She often tucked notes inside my mending when she returned it to me.

I read what she had written: "The crocuses are up. They are going to be purple this year. I have been waiting for them."

I looked at the calender and glanced at my watch. It was exactly one month to the hour that we had stood before her open grave. If she who loved flowers was once again aware of their springtime arrival, all was well. . . .

"Thank You," I said. "Thank You so much."

TREE

Joy Bergman

As I stand, under this tree,
it whispers to me
Telling me

How bravely
it took the winter
when its branches were stripped
and etched across a white sky.

Of how in the summer
heat of August
Its leaves fell, crisp like autumn
Only brown instead of russet and amber.

It spoke to me of Spring
when new buds, small and green
appeared — later on to flower into
green leaves.

IS THE PAST IMPORTANT?

Bess Foster Smith

ACCORDING to Arnold Toynbee, the greatest of historians, the past is of the greatest importance. It is the road by which we have arrived at our present state of civilization.

We look back and see that along the road all the wisdom of the ages has been enshrined and handed down in myths, allegories, fables, parables, heiroglyphics, and symbolic words and art forms. These remembrances constitute the rich soil from which our civilization has grown, its comfort and ease and other luxuries.

Many of us have known this to be true. We have accepted it on faith. We have relied on bits of this history which we call the Bible and have found it to be an acceptable way of life.

But all men are full of curiosity and like to know if possible just what the debt is that we owe the past and just what is so important about this ancient lore.

Really the relationship of past ages to the present is something like the perspective in a picture. We know that in a picture faraway objects must be foreshortened and pressed into smaller space. The mind, when it looks at the picture, sees these things in their true values. We must experience the same mental event in order to get a true picture of the past. Time has compressed the events as they receded until our consciousness retains them as a symbol—such as a color, a stone, or a sign.

Psychologists tell us that sometimes the meaning of such long-ago experiences sinks below the surface of consciousness, although it can keep a spark of creative thought or a lesson to be learned or a desire to be satisfied. The inner substance remains and renews itself from generation to generation. It is like the seed of a plant or the fruit of a tree. This process is called the creation of archetypes.

It is here in the archetypes that our basic instincts dwell. These are, according to Jung, the greatest authority on such mat-

ters, the instincts of our basic emotions. These emotions are the desire to reproduce our own kind and our wonder and awe and worship of the unknown.

Throughout the ages, man has sublimated, suppressed, and expressed these basic instincts in various ways. When he has controlled them or sublimated them to a higher form, he creates the foundation for love, recognition of all forms of beauty and art, and a love and care for others. He displays courage, learns to pray and be considerate of other people and his surroundings.

The Psalmist compares the upright man to a tree planted by the river of water. It bears good fruit and grows true to its nature. Its branches are diversified but as long as they hold fast to the tree they can draw from its source of beauty and strength. Its strength is from the soil enriched by all that has gone before —its past—and its beauty from the breath of God—the air—which surrounds it.

But there are some, the Psalmist says, who have lost sight of their true source of strength and would be free from the trunk of the Tree of Life. They are as dry branches cut off and void of all roots of tradition. They become frustrated in their emotions and are said to have complexes or arrested development.

"God has the whole world in his hands," the song says, and more and more of mankind is recognizing it. Whether he is the "seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," or inheritor of the 'Iliad and Odyssey,' or indebted to 'Osiris and Isis,' or a disciple of Jesus, or other great seers whose names have been lost in antiquity, we who follow are indebted to them all.

We must, as Toynbee warns, "Hold fast to that which is good, preserve and cherish the pattern given us, if we would retain the good life by the rivers of water."

Silently—and almost imperceptibly as the dawn at morning—God makes his presence known.

THE SILVER HORN

A Story by Eleanor Eberso le

ONCE there was a little boy who had a horn. When it was very still, the horn could be heard far and wide. The horn was silver. It radiated circles of light, and the boy matched his tones to the brightness. The boy played and played melodies on his horn, until the horn became his voice.

"Come, play for us," the children would say, but the boy somehow didn't want to. He just played for himself. He was afraid.

"Play for the company," someone said. But the boy didn't. How could he know when he put the silver mouthpiece to his lips what the trumpet would play, or what it would say?

Far and wide it became known that the boy with the silver trumpet could play as no one ever had before. But the boy was afraid.

One day it was announced that all the great horn-players of the land would gather in the marketplace to make music to celebrate the birthday of Christ.

"You must come," one person after another said to the boy. But he was afraid what the trumpet would play, or what it would say. He did not plan to go.

"Please come with me," his little friend said. She took his hand.

"All right," he agreed slowly. He took his trumpet, still fearful that the sounds he knew so well would not come out.

There, before the gathering crowd, the boy stood with his silver horn. He must play. He knew he must. There by the light of the newly formed creche he lifted his silver horn. And the brightness reflected itself on the bell.

The boy drew a breath as he put his lips to the metal. From the bell came a tone as beautiful as the boy himself. It carried on the still air, bringing wonder to all gathered there.

When he had finished, the boy took his trumpet and laid it

at the creche.

"There," he whispered in the silence to the figure of the Christ. "See. This is my silver horn. I played for you."

Then the boy took his horn and played into the valley, and to the mountains, and the people bowed on that Christmas morn.

APPALACHIAN CAROL NUMBER THREE

Bettie M. Sellers

I was not there when Jesus came
to Bethlehem one day;
I did not see the stable door
dark in the great star's ray.

The only Wise Men that I know
are pictured in my books,
with oxen breathing misty air
and shepherds holding crooks.

But if a mountain cove would do,
with squirrels and deer around—
I know a place the Savior-Child
might bed upon the ground.

The pines would curve above Him there,
their needles make His bed;
Corn Creek would croon a lullaby
around His infant head.

And I would hold my lantern high
to make a starry light—
He might think here was Bethlehem,
and now, first Christmas night.

OF TEMPORARY SEPARATIONS

Louise Kidder Sparrow

GOETHE says: "I am fully convinced that our spirit is a being of a nature quite indestructible, and that its activity continues from eternity to eternity. It is like the sun, which seems to set only to our earthly eyes, but which, in reality, never sets, but shines on unceasingly."

We so naturally follow our dear one who has passed to a larger life, that our own lives are given new horizons. We are at home wherever our loved one is. Our thoughts and existence are no longer shut within the four walls of this earthly home, but are at home in a limitless universe. We, too, become now at home in eternity. It is made sweet and familiar to us because he or she is there...goodness shines as serenely there as here. There and here have become one.

I remember, before I travelled to foreign lands, how far away and strange they seemed. Now, having lived in many parts of the world, all lands I have lived in are home to me and even lands I have not lived in are, too. We cannot stray out of our Father's house, because His house is all there is. Eternity is as familiar as today.

This is how it seems to me.

When a loved one passes on, he leads me out into these open spaces where I feel no fear of strangeness. The more friends and loved ones who go There ahead of me, the more There becomes my home.

If, as Stevenson says, "Blows are God's caresses," we should not wish to be unique among human beings and be spared the blows that seem necessary to our unfolding and development. We may not have the strength and vision to welcome them with joy as a manifestation of God's love and care, yet that is what they really are.

If ever there was a little family on earth where it would seem that death with its pain of separation should never have

come, it was that dear, complete and perfect family of my friend, herself its light and benediction. Everyone who entered there was blessed. It will still be so, and she will still be there as long as hearts beat that remember her. She will live on in those dear children, lovable and full of goodness.

Loose me from tears, and make me see aright
How each hath back what once he stayed to weep;
Homer his sight, David his little lad.

Not for always are these separations. We soon shall follow where a loved one leads. Meanwhile we must not shut our eyes to all the beauty of earth that remains to us, enhanced by precious memories and larger vision. Here also is heaven. Even in grief God permits us, when tears are dried, still to carry on as he or she would wish, and still to rejoice — for blessings that are forever ours.

NATURE SPEAKS

Jean Castile

After morningtide blows colored
Sunshine like opal cobwebs to melt
Over hills, roses are glazed with

Silver tears. Then crystal ice
Harps play as frosted fields dream
Of unborn flowers. Winter's opera

Performs as love grows in snowswirls.
Nature's beauty speaks about visions
Of the spirit, rebirth of the soul.

SUPPLICATION

Jean Moore Smith

Creator of the fragrance
Of honeysuckle on night air,
We must confess our failures.
Lighten this burden of despair.

Empower us to accomplish
If something more is ours to do.
Or should we "let go, let God"
And cast our troubling cares on You?

"To be is to do" —Lao Tze

THE GENTLE HOURS OF FRESH DELIGHTS

Louise Kidder Sparrow

When one has reached the blissful state
  Of simply *being*, not of *doing*,
Has found the time to meditate —
  The time for thoughtful self-renewing;

Then does rare harmony take place,
  Surcease of urgent, active striving,
One finds release, a calm, a grace,
  That lends a fresh delight to living.

Among the novelties of age —
  New ways of thinking, feeling, seeing —
Are benefits which now engage
  The golden hours of simply — *being*!

RELINQUISHED AND WON

Emily Sargent Councilman

Mary,
when did you let him go,
your son?
Victory relinquished
and won? When did you
let him go?

Finding him
new in the womb? (a shame to others,
but to you, accepted wonder, given grace).
Gabriel spoke... Elizabeth knew...
Then? New-found?

When did you let him go,
your son?

In the bringing him,
through pain, to birth? (O tenderly
you held him).
In that sudden flight,
hour after savage hour, fleeing
Herod's fear-forged instruments of death,
your aching arms holding your child fiercely,
the hardness of stone
pressing on your heart,
    did you let him go,
your son?

In those early after-years,
remembering that flight and pondering
the night of his day-bright star, of kneeling
shepherds and promised glory,
did you sometimes recall the sword
foretold to pierce
your heart?
And did you press his small body close,
closer to you
and to your unnamed grief?
Even so, did you let him go,
your son?

Throughout his childhood innocence
he needed you— why else had you
been chosen?
And at the threshold of his manhood
(but still a boy)
you could not leave him in the temple
even
"about his Father's business." He
needed you.
(Later, bereft of Joseph,
perhaps you needed him?)
But did you let him go,
your son?

When,
past thirty years of age, he left
the carpenter bench beneath your
roof, you
followed for a while. Still
baking his bread at Capernaum? Near,
yet strangely far away
from him? Was there time
for you to see this Man
walking new and ordained steps
in wondrous yet alien
ways? Did you hear
his startling words to the crowds
and to the few? "Blessed
are the meek... the poor in spirit... those
who thirst after righteousness... they
shall be filled.... The kingdom of heaven is with
you.... Love one another....
I lay down my life that I might
take it again."
    Did you see
his healing hands reach out to the leper,
the blind, the destitute
wherever human hands touched
his robe, where footsteps
followed him.

    Did you hear him say,
"Your sins are forgiven?
Be whole... be *whole*"?
Then did you let him go,
your son?

With time
and space between, did you,
with the others, fear
for him ("beside himself," was said),
go after him and try
to take him home? *Take*
him home?
Separated
by the press of human flesh between
and by the harshness
of relayed words, "My mother?
My brothers? Those who do the will
of Him who sent me..," did you
retrace those long futile miles
to Nazareth, bearing
the utter weariness of carried
loss?
Or did you let him go,
your son?

Kneeling
near his cross, for you
his final agony past bearing,
    did you hear
his triumph-words
and make them your own, "Father,
into Your hands...."
Then did you let him go,
even before
the third day
and the rolling away of the stone?

Mary,
When did you let him go,
your son?

FOUND

Nixeon Civille Handy

Like Peter I wander
haunting the haunted

Lost like the lamb
vaunting the vaunted

I leap in trance, entrancing
Heart and skin in dance, I ache,
dancing.

Here is the lamb
gone astray, astraying,

Grass less green to the ground
browning
Waterless streams to the dry stones
stoning.

O Lord of the found lamb
Here I am
Here I am
Here are my sheep in huddled fright
baa-aing, call the cold
midnight night

Unwatered
Unfed
Unshepherded.

Every man is born for heaven. —*Swedenborg*

FIVE CONTEMPLATIONS FOR EVERYMAN

From The Discourses of the Buddha

THERE ARE five facts, O monks, which ought to be often contemplated upon by man and woman, layfolk and monk. What are these five?

'I am sure to become old. I cannot avoid aging.'

'I am sure to become sick. I cannot avoid sickness.'

'I am sure to die. I cannot avoid death.'

'In all things dear and beloved there will be change and there will be separation from them.'

'I am owner of my actions, heir of my actions, actions are the womb from which I spring, actions are my kin, actions are my protection. Whatever actions I do, good or bad, I shall become their heir.'

Now, for what good reason should man or woman, layfolk or monk contemplate the fact that they are 'sure to become old and cannot avoid aging'? Beings while young take pride in youthfulness; and infatuated by that pride, they lead an evil life in deeds, words, and thoughts. But in him who often contemplates the certainty of old age the pride of youthfulness will either vanish or be weakened. For that good reason, the fact of old age should often be contemplated.

For what good reason should man or woman, layfolk or monk contemplate the fact that they are 'sure to become sick and cannot avoid it'? Beings while healthy take pride in their good health; and infatuated by that pride of health, they lead an evil life in deeds, words, and thoughts. But in him who contemplates the certainty of illness, the pride in being healthy will either vanish entirely or be weakened. For that good reason, the fact of sickness should often be contemplated.

For what good reason should man or woman, layfolk or monk contemplate the fact that they are 'sure to die and cannot avoid death'? Beings while alive take pride in life; and infatuated by that pride of life, they lead an evil life in deeds, words, and thoughts. But in him who contemplates the certainty of death

the pride in being alive will either vanish entirely or be weakened. For that good reason the fact of death should often be contemplated.

For what good reason should man or woman, layfolk or monk contemplate the fact that in all 'things dear and beloved' there will be change and 'there will be separation from them'? Beings have lustful desire for what is dear and beloved; and inflamed by lust, they lead an evil life in deeds, words and thoughts. But in him who contemplates the fact of change in things dear and beloved, such evil conduct will either vanish entirely or be weakened. For that good reason the fact of change in what is beloved should often be contemplated.

For what good reason should man or woman, layfolk or monk contemplate the fact that they are 'owners of their actions . . . and that whatever actions they do, good or bad, they will become their heirs'? There are beings who lead an evil life in deeds, words, and thoughts. But in him who contemplates the fact of his responsibility for his actions, such evil conduct will either vanish entirely or be weakened. For that good reason the fact of responsibility for one's actions should often be contemplated.

NOW, O monks, the noble disciple contemplates thus: I am not the only one to become old, to fall ill and to die. But wherever beings come and go, depart and re-arise, they all are subject to old age, sickness, and death. In him who contemplates these facts the Path of the stages of sainthood arises. He now regularly attends to that Path, cultivates and strengthens it. While he is doing so, the Fetters will vanish entirely and the evil proclivities will come to an end.

Further, the noble disciple contemplates thus: 'I am not the only one for whom there is change in what is dear and beloved; I am not the only one who is the responsible owner and heir of his actions. But wherever beings come and go, depart and re-arise, for all of them there is change in what is dear and beloved; and all of them are owners and heirs of their actions. In him who often contemplates these facts, the Path arises. He

now regularly attends to that Path, cultivates and strengthens it. While he is doing so, the Fetters will vanish entirely and the evil proclivities will come to an end.

Subject to old age, sickness and death, beings in such a state are loathed by the worldling. But he should rather think: 'If I'd feel repelled by beings of such nature, it were not right for me who likewise share such a fate. While dwelling in such thoughts and knowing of Nirvana's unencumbered state, I shall defeat entire that threefold pride in health and youth and life's exuberance, seeing that secure peace in renunciation lies. Towards Nirvana gazing, zeal arose in me: Now I can never yield to sense-desire! one never to turn back, shall I become. The Holy Life is now my highest goal.' *(V 57)*

A CHILD CAN SEE

Eleanor B. Mathews

In early years, before the night sky
was clouded with sin,
The child saw clearly, not a vision,
but a clear, benign face.
It was lighted, strangely, with a brightness,
a ring of light;
And before the child became old and his eyes
dazzled by self-reflection
The image was always there, a face not troubled,
but serene, wearing his thorns like laurel.

WHY DO THE RIGHTEOUS SUFFER?

Mildred Long

IT IS a perennial question. Why do the children of God have so much trouble? Some more than others. There are many ways of asking this question and many answers, none of them all-inclusive. All together, the answers may satisfy at least in part. Remember God has not given us all the answers to all the why's.

The righteous suffer, first, because we are not righteous—enough. We are often faulty and disobedient. The Scriptures say, "None is righteous." When sin entered into the world, suffering came with it. We have no record of any man living a perfectly righteous life, no man except Jesus Himself.

Second, everyone suffers, good or bad. The righteous man may have fewer problems than the unrighteous and his suffering may be of a different nature. But all suffer. Even Jesus suffered. If He was not exempt, why should we think any of us should be?

Third, we suffer because we are disobedient to God's laws. This suffering becomes a curative measure even as pain helps us to find and cure the cause if we are at all alert to get back on center; if we submit more willingly and completely to God's laws, which govern every aspect of our living.

We break the laws of health and suffer physically. We neglect the laws of the mind and bring about many misfortunes. We ignore the laws of the spirit and so fail to grow in knowledge and understanding, and this affects every avenue of our living. Our disobedience is due to ignorance, self-centeredness, or indifference. But laws of the mind, body, or spirit cannot be broken without some unwelcome consequences.

We often obey the natural laws in more detail and with more care than the laws of the spirit. If we could walk with "the single eye," with the desires centered in the Kingdom of God and the heart attuned to His will, there is no question but that life's problems and suffering would be greatly diminished.

But we have to face the facts: that suffering is universal, that God permits it. And let us assume also that God has a pur-

pose in it for each individual, and in cooperation with God's plan we can turn it all to the good.

Paul believed this most heartily. He affirmed: "All things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose." Jesus did not promise His disciples exemption from trouble. He said: "In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." He implies here that we too can overcome. He said if we believe in Him, out of us will flow "rivers of living water," indicating a total supply for every need. He said: "Ye who are weary, come unto Me, and I will give you rest....I will bear the heavier part of the yoke; just walk along with me."

Jesus did not expect us to carry our burdens and trials alone. He says, "I am with you always; cast all your care upon me; I will give you strength to bear your part; and if you will let go of your burden and give it to me, you will find it light, easy to bear."

This spells victory. This points to achievement of a sort we would never experience without the trouble.

Many a handicapped person has scored way ahead of most "normal" people because of discipline and effort and perseverance made necessary for his survival. But he has made the survival extremely productive.

Furthermore, we have the promise of "God is faithful who will not permit you to be tested above that ye are able but will with the testing make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it." God stands by. He does not leave us to bear our troubles alone. But He wants us to take hold of it and do something worth while with it. And for this He gives us the strength and the know-how.

These troubles serve as disciplines. In Hebrews two reasons are given for God's discipline: that we might be partakers of His lonliness and that we might be healed. The choice is ours. We can resist it, defy it, fight it, and perish. Or we can accept it, use it, recreate it, transform it into something good, and live. Live more abundantly than we would have lived without it.

There is a story of a woman confined to a wheelchair be-

cause of an accident. A friend said to her, "Well, this will certainly color the rest of your life." "Yes," she replied, "but I intend to choose the color!"

God has given us this free will of choice. We may not be able to choose those things that come our way, that happen in our lives. We may be to blame or not. But no matter. God *has* given us this power of choice. We can choose what we will do with the circumstance. Every moment is a chance to choose. And what we choose each moment will add up to what we are able to choose when disaster strikes.

We can turn disaster into advantage. We are thus co-creators with God. And we sometimes forget that these two reasons for God to require some discipline are of paramount importance. We are here to grow into His likeness, to take on His holiness, to be healed in mind and spirit. Shall we despise the means by which we arrive at this state? The sad part is that too many of us make no good use of our suffering.

The world would be infinitely poorer without Paul, who wrote to the Philippians from a Roman dungeon; or Bunyan, who composed *The Pilgrim's Progress* in solitary confinement; or Beethoven, who composed when totally deaf; or Milton, who in his blindness wrote *Paradise Lost*; or Handel, who set down *Messiah* in the throes of soul agony. And see how Edison turned his deafness into light for the whole world.

We can take any disaster and make it contribute to happiness and thus become co-creators with God.

Unless the suffering or trouble we must bear makes us sweeter in disposition, more understanding and more gentle, wiser in the ways of God, and more submissive to His will, then we have failed to use it aright. The disciplines of suffering are to lead us to a holier life and to spiritual healing. If we are attuned to His will we have at our disposal all the promises, all the power of God to be overcomers. This is the victory we seek in this life, and this victory brings joy.

WHAT IS CHRISTMAS?

Clara Sargent Mainwaring

So quietly it came, the snow that fell in the night
On the tip of each pine blade to each bit of sod—
Like a soft downy blanket sparkling and white,
In the distance the sleigh bells ring loud and clear
For friends are coming from far and near—
There are wreaths of holly and mistletoe
and lights in a thousand homes that glow—
There are trees of spruce and cedar and pine
Where balls of every color shine.

What is Christmas?

It's the ivy and hemlock on picture and wall:
the gaily-wrapped gifts for one and all.
It's the gleam of joy in the eyes of a child
The look of faith that will not be denied—
It's the rhythmic patter of children's feet
and children's voices clear and sweet--
The carols they sing, the laughter and mirth
and every good thing all over the earth—

What is Christmas?

It's the deed of love so freely given
Unknown to any, save God in Heaven—
It's the smile on the face of a tired one
That word of praise for a task well done—
The bringing of laughter to tear-dimmed eyes,
When long-cherished hopes are realized—
It's the thrill that comes when our choice is made
of doing without, some other to aid—

What is Christmas?

It's the warmth and glow of loving hearts
Where the Christ has entered in—
Where the lights of joy and peace and love
Like bright stars shine from within,
It's sharing our blessings of comfort and cheer
With each life we touched every day of the year.

This is Christmas!

SPIRITUAL GARDENERS

Michael Toryfter

Let us go forth into the world uprooting the weeds of hate and greed, and replacing them with the seeds of faith, hope, and charity.

GOLDEN TROUVERES

Susan Shields

Daffodil jongleurs adnorning the morning
Arraying with glory the court of the Lord,
Troubadour blossoms performing on cornets
Are trumpeting praises in floral accord.

Golden trouveres in a host ceremonious
Blowing the chivalrous poems of old,
Jovial blooms in melodic romances
Extol with devotion the God they behold.

Daffodil jongleurs adorning the morning
Arraying with glory the court of the Lord,
Troubadour blossoms performing on cornets
Are trumpeting praises in floral accord.

GOD SPEAKS

Mary Leach

Hallowed are the shrines that enclose Me,
Precious are the thoughts abiding near Me.
Remember your spirit is My home,
Your house, too, is Mine alone.

Protection from foolish fears, I promise ye,
My holiness, power and purity.
Ever bright My glory shines—
round about all that's Mine.

NEW BIRTH

Mildred Long

Return to the starlit sea;
Watch the swinging birds;
Become a part of the rhythm of waves
On the curving sand.

Let go of all tensions; be free —
Free from thoughts or words,
Free as the ebb and flow that laves
The margin of land.

One with the sky, the deep,
Lost in the silent robe
Of living light that clothes the earth
Setting creation free.

Silent and still as in sleep,
Its secrets try not to probe;
But let the rhythms give you birth
In the heart of Eternity.

BROTHER JESUS

Edw. Anthony Casaceli

Night falls like a shadow over me,
Oh my sweet Jesus,
Like a cloud you enter my spirit,
Like the night,
Or as after a dark storm,
A rainbow appears in the Heavens,
Standing on the edge of Eternity.
My spirit, alone . . .
Like a tiny flower along the roadside,
"My spirit is waiting for the Lord!"
For, I hear His footsteps
coming down the road before me,
Closer and closer
To my sweet Brother Jesus.

POEM

Didi Manley

Strength and sweetness are the same
In Christ, the Lord.
And in a very few
Who follow in his name
Strength and sweetness are the same —
Bone and pulse in one accord.

A CIRCLE

Virginia Arnold

HAVE YOU ever watched a dog chase his tail? He goes around and around in a circle.

We have a dog. It is against the law for him to run loose, so he is chained to the clothes-pole. He, too, goes around and around in a circle.

You might say he is in a rut. I have heard it said that a rut is like a grave. A grave and a rut both have sides. The only difference is that a rut has no ends — it just goes on and on.

Well, I know people who are like this. They have a rut that goes in a circle. Instead of drawing people into their circle, they leave them outside.

Once I read a beautiful poem on this thought. It told of how love drew a circle around someone and brought him into yours.

Is your circle a small circle? Does it include only your doctrine, your race, your church, your family, your friends, your neighbors, or does it reach out — to understand, to be understood, to the unchurched, the sick, the discouraged, the homeless, the hungry, those in jail, and those who are strangers?

PRAISE AND LOVE

Francis O. Raniville

Words and songs of praises ring
Peace and truth to God, my King
Joys impart,
With a purer mind can heal
With a secret love that's real
In my heart.

EXPONENTIAL SOUL

Doris Wight

It gnaws my thought that perhaps my soul is a
small soul;
the pettiness of my person, my life,
upsets me;
it appears that decisions I make
are often wanting;
it appears I spend myself in
funneled range.

It eats at peace that my soul may be a
shrunk soul;
perhaps in the crux of crisis
my will would desert;
I suspect I have grown selfish — when do I
help them,
the millions of far-off beings? him
next door?

It bleeds my lip to catch glimpses briefly of
conscience
in the harried rush of duties
small and old,
or see in a mirror a cramped, a squeezed-down
something
unworthy of what — perhaps —
fate might have meant.

Oh soul so large! so luminous!
charity glowing!
dimension unmeasured through
understanding broad!
forgetful of self for others! —
where are you hiding?

Why do I fail?

Is this,
then,
seeking God?

THREE POEMS

by Winifred Hamrick Farrar

1/ At Evening

And East shall meet West at evening.
Rose light dancing, they shall become one
At the end of the day in the dark glow. . .
When the trip has been made, to their rest then reached;
They shall have peace, horizon now found.
Though they touch air, they shall find mass;
Though they fall into night, they shall wake again;
Though circles are tight, peace is not.
And East shall meet West at evening.

2/ *In Galilee*

Near Golan Heights there is a shining sea
Now lapping earth as in her ancient days
Catching eternal sky of Galilee
Recalling Jesus' voice, his calming ways.
But diving, whining planes disturb its dream
About the natural tempests it once knew—
Cut through its depths with roar and force the gleam
Of metal tooled for war upon the blue
Rebuking open eye turned up to wait
With hopeful patience heaven's healing peace,
A spoken, magic word to still the hate

Between the sons of Adam, give release
From evil storms of soul, bring needed balm
Remembered from the past, Messiah's calm.

3/ In Dream

In dream
Between this world and the world to come,
I saw cool water for the thirsty. . .
Heard bells sounding
For the rising sun
Striking the multitude,
Blessing their human hearts.

In dream
A lambent light
Rested upon the heads of all,
Caressing faces, their hungry cheeks—
Surrounded me in the morning,
Expanded to fill the earth
And pour its glory upon the people.

In dream,
Sent by the spirit of love
To give the peace of God—
Light conquered the dark,
Revealed the living to me. . .
Old people beneath the willow trees,
Young ones playing among flowers.

In dream
Those in middle age gathered rich harvest
And sang in the fields,
Companions to birds and butterflies;
I saw that each one knew his place
In the grand scheme of creation. . .
I saw no human need.

NOTICES AND COMMENT

PASSING OF A LONGTIME MEMBER. We are sorry to report the death on September 10 of Ralph G. Felger, of Fort Wayne, Indiana, following a brief illness and hospitalization. Mr. Felger was an active member for years. Sympathy is extended to his family and wife, Wilma, who also has been active for many years in support of F.I.P.

LORETA INMAN HONORED. Loreta Inman, of Atlanta, Georgia, a member of the Fellowship since 1954 and a prolific contributor to its pages, has received recognition of her talents by inclusion of a poem "God Nourishes the Soul" in the Italian publication *Quadreni di Poesia.* Her poem first appeared in these pages in 1964.

NEW BOOK. Advisor Georga Palmer Dishner's *Heritage Echoes* has been published by Royal Printing Company of Johnson City, Tennessee (104 pages, $3.00). This fine collection of poems, beautifully printed, is the fulfillment of Mrs. Dishner's lifelong dream of publishing a book of her own work.

GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS. What could be more appropriate at this festive season than the gift of a year's subscription to *FIP?* Send it to loved ones and friends at the still-unchanged rate of three dollars a year—four dollars overseas. Special rates available for copies in quantity.

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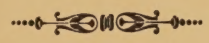

CHRISTMAS EVE
IN KITZBUHEL, AUSTRIA *Marion J. Richardson*

Carrying lighted torches
held toward the heavens,
skiers descend a snow-lit
mountain on skis, assembling
at the bottom, singing carols,
celebrating the birthday of
Christ.

THERE COMES A TIME. . . .

We regret to announce that, with inflationary costs and higher postage rates (and prospects of further increases), the Fellowship can no longer send **free** copies of *FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER.*

If your subscription has expired, we since rely hope you will want to renew it. Otherwise, we will be compelled to stop sending you further copies.

As yet, we have not increased our subscription rates, which do not cover present costs.

We are sorry that the time has come when—of necessity—we must follow this procedure.

COMPREHENSION

Carla Patsuris

The North Star gleams
Balanced in space;
On time,
In place

The frail moon beams
Its piloted way.
And after the night:
Prophetic day

Constantly punctual when
Year upon year
Resurrections
In season appear. .

Yet now and then
A human being
Does not see
What he is seeing.